



Shelby County Government

A C Wharton, Jr.
Mayor

June 9, 2008

Honorable Mike Ritz, Commissioner
Shelby County Board of Commissioners
160 North Main, Suite 450
Memphis, TN 38103

Dear Commissioner Ritz:

This letter is written in response to your letter of June 2 and the questions regarding the updated efficiency study.

Page 8: Did the FY 2009 budget amendments for the Sheriff include these possible savings?

No. The saving estimates were based on the assumption of an "appointed" sheriff and the elimination of certain duplicated functions.

Page 9: Trustee's IT – Can the IT group give us some recommendations?

Yes, but I also suggest that we request that the TCO weigh in on this issue as a part of the "enterprise plan".

On a separate note relative to the Trustee, I am attaching a copy of a letter Mr. Huntzicker sent to the Trustee on May 14th. Jim informed me today that he has not received a reply, but was told by IT that AT&T has been asked to provide a separate proposal for the Trustee. In our opinion and that of the State Auditors, such a contract would not be legal.

Page 9: Assessor – Does duplication still exist?

Yes. In fact, the Assessor just recently ordered a second Cisco 4000 switch to create redundancy. IT has been asked to install the switch which would take about two days of a technician's time. If the Assessor's systems were put on our central system which is already redundant, the purchase would not be necessary.

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Page 10: Register: Same as Trustee question.

Yes. Again, the TCO could be an independent voice.

As an editorial comment, not specific to any of the questions, our central IT department feels it could take over the infrastructure (networks, servers and desktop support) of all elected officials with approximately 25% of all the IT positions that exist outside of central IT. This would also provide some system improvements such as single e-mail address books, etc.

Page 10: Clerk: Were any of the \$385,000 savings in the approved 2009 budget?

Not that we can identify.

Initiatives – Fines & Costs: This issue of uncollected fines, fees and costs is at least 10 years old. Can the Mayor's administration build a solution?

We have been attempting to do so for over two years, but this will take the cooperation of the judges. We have been working through the Justice Committee headed by Bill Powell and have held several meetings with the judges. I am attaching a draft of a recent proposal for the judge's consideration that would simplify the process by making changes/additions to court rules. Bill tells me that he expects to hear from Judge Ryan-Lambert within the next two weeks relative to many of the previously discussed issues.

Initiative 2 – Court Clerks Consolidate: Will you make a specific recommendation to our Governmental Affairs committee?

We have brought this up in both efficiency and budget committee meetings. I believe the question of need and court structure would be better addressed by a legislative initiative.

Current Efficiency Program: Contracts with the City –

Will the engineering contract be forthcoming?

Yes. The contract is nearing completion and we are pushing to have it finalized as soon as possible.

Will you bring forward recommendations concerning storm water management, fleet services and signs?

We are in discussions regarding all three areas and will bring forward recommendations should we determine that change is warranted. I believe that the storm water issue is the most pressing and, at a minimum, we will be recommending storm water fees to cover the costs of either a contract or in house workers (most municipalities already do this).

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What about fire services?

Letter to Council from Chair

We felt we were close to an agreement with the City over a year ago, but the City backed out. The primary reasons were 1) we were not willing to pay in excess of \$2 million over and above our fire fees; 2) the City was to require all County personnel start over at the bottom of the seniority system; and 3) the City claimed it needed to maintain the same level of service in all areas. This would have substantially increased the cost in the unincorporated areas.

With the passage of time and some personnel changes, we think the City's position may have changed and we are making new inquiries.

However, this will remain on the back burner until we have completed the engineering discussions.

What about housing projects? Housing operation of OPD?


Cohen

We are working with HUD to close the Shelby County Housing Authority, but this is proving to be an almost impossible task. The projects are owned by HUD, but we can not just walk away. Prior attempts to transfer them to the City were rebuffed. We continue to work with HUD to find a solution.

With regard to the housing operation of OPD, we are looking at its operations, including its divisional placement. Mr. Copeland can give you more details if you desire.

We continue to work at becoming more efficient and expect to report additional progress on a regular basis. The Commission's support in this effort is appreciated.

Sincerely,


A C Wharton, Jr.
Mayor